36: Gourou--23 (no date) 1947 Laotians
116, 311, 361, 376, 503

"Problems of the Mekong and of Laos.

Above Kratié the mighty River Mekong is of very little use. True, it is easy to imagine a marvellous control program, a sort of grandiose Laotian T.V.A. Dams would divide the river into level reaches; locks would allow ships of large tonnage to sail as far as Luang Prabang; the dams would make possible a huge electricity production, and the irrigation of vast tracts. Rice, cotton, maize, would fill the holds of river vessels that would ply to the sea without transhipping their cargos. Pacific and profitable co-operation would be established between Indochina and Siam.... All of which are daydreams. Capital is lacking and, above all, manpower. Such works would be possible only if the lands drained by the Mekong were populous. But Laos should nevertheless not be neglected. It should draw great profit from a modernization of forest exploitation, and from the application of the measures we have outlined above. Nothing valuable, however, will be effected in Laos unless, at first, small, selected areas are developed. It is difficult to help sparse, shifting populations, who escape both health measures and education. Whereas, if the Laotians scientifically colonize their own territory, beginning with integral development of favored areas with health control, they will then be setting up centers of demographic expansion and of economic activity from which the development of the less favored regions can proceed. Only then can the Mekong's domestication be begun."